

REVISITING A DEFENSE OF THE BIBLE'S CREDIBILITY
Part III - Answering Opposition To The Bible's Full Divine Inspiration
(Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16)

I. Introduction

- A. Though we have learned in this series that we can trust our 66-book Bible to be God's Word, some critics claim that mistakes were included even by the Bible's authors in their autograph manuscripts (mss)!
- B. However, as John Wesley said, "If there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth" (Boice, Does Inerrancy Matter?, p. 28).
- C. We thus answer criticisms of the Bible's full divine inspiration and authority (as follows):

II. Answering Opposition To The Bible's Full Divine Inspiration, Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16.

- A. Various critics do not hold to the full divine inspiration of Scripture in various ways (as follows):
 - 1. Liberal Theology advocates deny the *infallibility* of the Bible's autograph mss, claiming that they contain errors that were *intentionally* placed there by those who authored or edited its books.
 - 2. Some evangelicals (at Fuller Theological Seminary and "Moderates" in the Southern Baptist Convention) have denied the *inerrancy* of the autograph mss, claiming that they contain *unintentional* errors!
 - 3. Others deny the *plenary* inspiration of the autograph mss, that **not all** of the Bible's mss are divinely inspired or that **parts** of the Bible's autograph mss were **not fully** divinely inspired and authoritative.
 - 4. Neo orthodox theologians *deny* the **objective** divine inspiration of Scripture's *written words*, claiming that those words *subjectively become divinely inspired* in the *mind* of the *reader when he reads Scripture*.
- B. However, Scripture itself claims that it is *infallibly, inerrantly, completely and objectively divinely inspired*:
 - 1. Matthew 5:18 reveals that God's inspiration includes the *infallible* and *inerrant quality* of *each* of the autograph mss's word *letters* ("jot") and *parts of* the autograph mss's word *letters* ("tittle").
 - 2. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul claimed that *all (plenary, complete)* Scripture is God inspired and authoritative.
 - 3. Also, the 2 Timothy 3:16 NIV term "God-breathed" translates the Greek verbal adjective *theopneustos* (B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 736; Wm. Hendriksen, 1-2 Timothy, p. 302) Its *"-tos"* ending gives this adjective the verbal quality of a perfect passive force, meaning that the *written Scriptures exist* as a *perpetually permanent* (perfect tense) *divine production* (passive voice) so that they *objectively always bear God's authority* (Ibid., Hendriksen; A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek N. T., p. 1095).
- C. God did *not dictate* Scripture, for its books vary in style and vocabulary. Rather, 2 Peter 1:21 claims the Holy Spirit "bore along" (*phero*) the writers like the wind bears a sailing ship along, so that without impeding their expressions (to move freely about on the ship), they ended up writing *exactly* what *God wanted* them to write.
- D. The divine inspiration of Scripture thus covers its figures of speech. For example, Jesus called Herod a "fox" in Luke 13:32, a term that *critics* can charge is *literally inaccurate!* However, this figure, an *eleutheria*, is a bold expression used to convey a *frank but accurate* reality (E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, p. 932). Jesus' *hearers* understood that He did *not* mean that Herod was a *literal fox*, but that Herod was cunning and harmful *like* a fox is cunning and harmful! It was an effective way for Jesus *accurately* to express a *truth* about Herod through the *normal* – thus *including figurative* – use of human language!
- E. In addition, reputable scholars have testified about the accuracy and credibility of the Bible's mss:
 - 1. Millar Burrows, professor emeritus of Yale University and an authority on the Dead Sea Scrolls, wrote, "Such evidence as archaeology has afforded thus far, especially providing additional and older manuscripts of the books of the Bible, strengthens our confidence in the accuracy with which the text has been transmitted through the centuries" (Millar Burrows, What Mean These Stones?, 1956, p. 42, as cited in Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1990, p. 93).
 - 2. On the following citation, Reformed Judaism denies the divine authority of Scripture as stated in its 1885 Pittsburgh Platform according to Israel My Glory, 1996, April-May, p. 15. However, "Reformed Jewish scholar, Nelson Glueck, has affirmed: 'It is worth emphasizing that in all this work no archaeological discovery has ever controverted [refuted] a single, properly understood biblical statement.'" (John Montgomery, Christianity for the Tough Minded, 1973, p. 6, cited in McDowell, Ibid.; brackets ours)

Lesson and Application: In accord with Scripture's testimony, we believe that the 66-book Bible's autograph manuscripts are all fully divinely inspired without any intentional or unintentional error in conveying the truth that God desired the Bible's authors to write. Any allegation of human "error" in the autograph manuscripts thus arises from the critic's ignorance of the truth that can be explained by correct instruction or archaeological finds.